

AA-72

Circa 1853 and 1859

West River Methodist Church  
Shadyside  
Private

The West River Methodist Church is important architecturally as a local example of vernacular Greek Revival ecclesiastical architecture. It was built in 1853 and enlarged in 1859.

The presence of eparate entrances and seating areas for white and black worshipers represents Ante-bellum social attitudes

AA-72

Thomas Pumphrey House

Shadyside

## MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Development Period: Agricultural-Industrial Transition

Prehistoric/Historic Period Themes: Architectural; Religion; Social & Cultural

Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function and Use: Church, later barn and garage

Known Design Source: None

# Maryland Historical Trust

## State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. AA-72

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

### 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic West River Methodist Church

and/or common

### 2. Location

street & number Muddy Creek Road ☐ not for publicationcity, town Shadyside ☒ vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county Anne Arundel

### 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

### 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Tom Warpinski

street &amp; number 5501 Swamp Circle Road telephone no.: (410) 867-7163

city, town Churchton state and zip code: Maryland 20733

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Anne Arundel County Courthouse liber 3721

street &amp; number Church Circle folio 14

city, town Annapolis state Maryland

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

As indicated by its name, the West River Methodist Church was erected as a house of worship, but has not served in that capacity for decades. Its original appearance is significantly altered and reflects its subsequent use as a garage and as a bam. It is in an advanced state of deterioration.

The West River Methodist Church is a north-facing, two-and-a-half story, gable front, vernacular Greek Revival-style building. The structure's frame construction features both hand-hewn and mill-sawn elements, which rest upon a brick and concrete block foundation. Walls are sheathed with clapboards, some of which have fallen off exposing the building's framing system.

Stylistic detailing is restrained, but reflective of the Greek Revival taste. Architectural appointments include comerboards treated as pilasters that rise up and engage the cornice. The later is wide and plain, with partial returns on the principal facade. Windows were elongated, with twelve-over-twelve double hung sashes and wide, bold surrounds.

Fenestration patterns remain intact, though most window frames are absent and all are boarded over. Doors are missing and openings enlarged. The principal facade features two symmetrical and aligning bays. The original front entrance is replaced with a pair of wooden doors, installed to accommodate automobiles and farm equipment. The longitudinal walls contained three evenly spaced openings on the first level. In the west wall, the first bay once featured a door providing direct access to an interior staircase leading to the upstairs balcony, where white worshippers observed services. The third bay in the east wall was a secondary entrance for white parishioners, but as with the front entrance, it is reconfigured to accommodate the passage of automobiles and farm equipment.

The building has been enlarged. A break in the clapboards and cornice is present on the building's east and west sides. Evidence of expansion is corroborated by corresponding breaks in the sill and plate. This north side expansion occurred early in the building's history (records indicate 1859) and employs the same materials and building methods as the main body of the building.

The building's interior is in a very poor and highly altered condition; portions are exposed to the elements. The balcony level is structurally unsound. The most dramatic alterations occurred when the building was converted into a tobacco barn. The floor is mostly exposed dirt and a system of posts and cross sills used for the hanging of tobacco is present. Original machine sawn lath attached with wire nails remains in some areas, though most of the plaster is absent.

Several important interior elements remain in place, but are badly deteriorated. These include a small room, likely a church school or choral room, located in the building's northeast corner. In this corner of the room, the externally accessed staircase encroaches into the room. The room's interior displays the best preserved examples of window trim, which are wide, slightly molded, with comer blocks. The walls of the room facing the main body of the church originally displays a high level of finish and features beaded board above the chair rail and molded faux grained paneling below.

The balcony, which spans the full length of the north end, is collapsing. The slope of the seating area, aisles, and stair entrance are visible, but railing and other finish treatment is absent.

## 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates	1853 / 1859	Builder/Architect						
Check:	Applicable Criteria:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D			
	and/or							
	Applicable Exception:	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	<input type="checkbox"/> E	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> G
	Level of Significance:	<input type="checkbox"/> national	<input type="checkbox"/> state	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> local				

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The West River Methodist Church was built c.1853 and enlarged in c.1859, and is executed in the Greek Revival style, popular at that time (1)(2). Its architectural significance is derived not only from its styling, but also for the manner in which entrances and internal spaces are separated into different areas for white and black worshipers, thus reflecting social attitudes in ante-bellum Anne Arundel County.

Located in the Shadyside vicinity, this area was settled by Quakers in the seventeenth century. However, the Quaker influence began to fade by the time of the American Revolution, replaced in large part by Methodism, the Protestant denomination brought to the area in the third quarter of the eighteenth century by Bishop Francis Asbury (3). Asbury's preaching were part of the spiritual "Great Awakening", the evangelical fervor that took place, especially in the middle and southern colonies (later states) during the mid- and late-eighteenth century. Methodist doctrine originally reject slavery. As a result, the new faith resonated with persons of African as well as European descent (4).

The Methodist hierarchy established circuits extending from New York into the Carolinas. The Shadyside/Churchton area was originally part of the Calvert Circuit, established in 1781, but according to local history, no official church building was in the area until 1825 (5). By mid-19th century seven churches made up the West River Circuit. These were Owensville, Centenary, Friendship, McKendree, Wesley Chapel, Mt. Zion, and West River. West River was built on land acquired from Richard Simmons in 1850. The 1860 minutes of the Quarterly Conference of West River. Circuit values the church at \$1,500. This value is the fourth highest amongst the seven churches.

It is notable that the church ministered to both black and white parishioners. Black populations often established their own houses of worship, and 1874-1894 county land records indicate the presence of a local African Methodist Episcopal church. Despite this alternative, oral history indicates that West River Methodist was a place of worship for both races into the twentieth century (6). A written history claims the area historically experienced very good race relations, an atmosphere attributed to the residual Quaker influence. This reported attitude of tolerance is supposed to have attracted free blacks to the area in the years prior to The Civil War. Another indicator that the area was more sympathetic to the plight of African-Americans is evidenced by West River Methodist's position in the pre-Civil War schism that split the denomination into northern and southern factions. Many Anne Arundel County Methodist churches allied with the Southern position, and affiliated with the newly organized Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The West River church, however, remained a part of the main-line Methodist Episcopal Church that condemned slavery. Parishioner attitudes about tolerance and equality had their limits. The boundaries of acceptance are clearly illustrated in this building's segregated entrances and worship areas. Parishioner's attitudes about tolerance and equality only went so far, as evidenced by the segregated entrances worship areas.

(see continuation sheet)

**8.1 Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support**

Why the West River Methodist Church was abandoned is not clear, but about 1950 it was no longer used for religious services (7). Church trustees divested the property in 1970. Subsequently, the building was used as a garage and as a barn. The former church is now vacant and in an advanced state of deterioration.

## Survey No. AA-72

- ## 10. Geographical Data

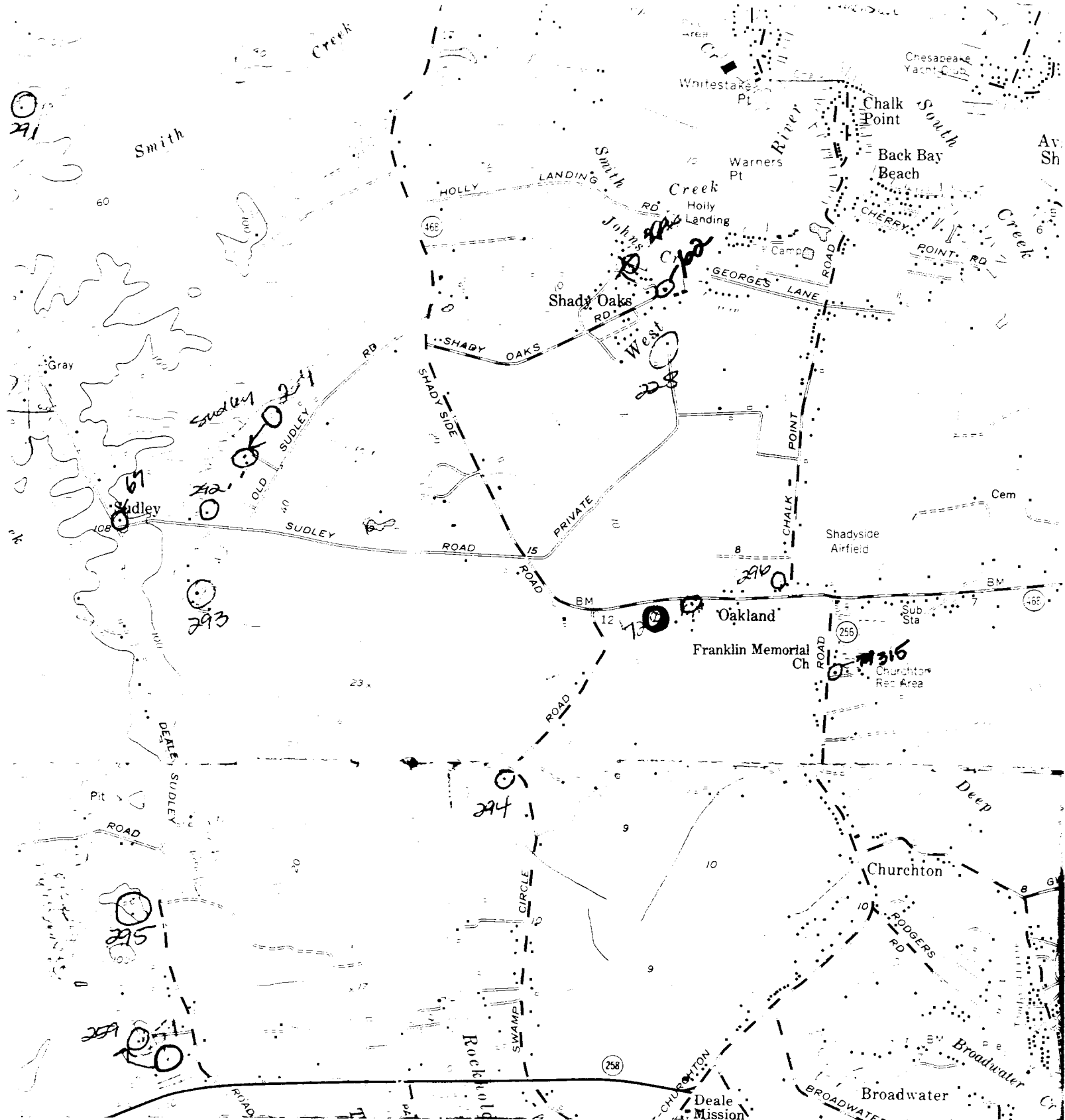
# Introduction

state	code	county	code
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**11. Form Prepared by**

city or town      Annapolis      state      Maryland

PS-2746



**DEALE**  
 USGS 7.5 minute series  
 Scale: 1:24,000  
 1957, photo revised 1979

**Site Number: AA-72**  
**Site Name: West River Methodist Church**  
**Location: Shady Side Road (Rt. 648),**  
**Shadyside**





AA-72

WEST RIVER METHODIST CHURCH

ANNE ARUNDEL CO., MARYLAND

PHOTO BY SHERRI M. MARSH, JULY 1996

NEG. AT MARYLAND SHPO

FRONT PERSPECTIVE (SE)

PHOTO 1 OF 4



AA- 72

WEST RIVER METHODIST CHURCH

ANNE ARUNDEL CO, MARYLAND

PHOTO BY SHERRI M. MARSH, JULY 1990

NEG. AT MARYLAND SHPO

REAR PERSPECTIVE

PHOTO 2 OF 4



AA-72

WEST RIVER METHODIST CHURCH  
ANNE ARUNDEL CO., MARYLAND

Photo By ShERRI M. MARSH, July 1996

NEG. AT MARYLAND SHPO

INTERIOR VIEW

Photo 3 of 4



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WEST RIVER METHODIST CHURCH

ANNE ARUNDEL CO., MARYLAND

PHOTO BY SHERRI M. MARSH, JULY 1996

NEG. AT MARYLAND SHPO

INTERIOR VIEW OF EXTERIOR STAIR ENTRY

Photo 4 of 4